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Consideration of reports: reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant

List of issues in relation to the fifth periodic report of Uruguay

Addendum

Replies of Uruguay to the list of issues*

[Date received: 14 March 2017]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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I. General information

1. Please indicate whether the rights enshrined in the Covenant may be invoked before the domestic courts and directly cited as a basis for judicial decisions and, if so, please provide specific examples of case law from the last five years. Please also indicate to what extent those decisions have been enforced.

1. By Act No. 13751 of 10 July 1969, Uruguay ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The rights enshrined in the Covenant unquestionably may be invoked before the domestic courts and directly cited as a basis for their judicial decisions. Following are examples of judgments, all duly enforced, in which Uruguayan courts have directly cited provisions of the Covenant:

- Judgment No. 0006-000158/2013 of 17 September 2013 of the Civil Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, which, in an *amparo* proceeding brought with a view to obtaining an expensive drug for the treatment of a terminal illness, recalled that, under article 12 of the Covenant, States parties recognize the right of everyone "to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health", and invoked that article as one of the legal bases of its decision.
- Judgment No. 0007-000123/2014 of 13 June 2014 of the Civil Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, which cited the aforementioned article 12 of the Covenant in ruling on a case similar to the one described above.
- Judgment No. 0009-000003/2015 of 30 January 2015 of the Civil Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, in a case similar to the one described above.
- Judgment No. 211/2016 of 25 July 2016 of the Supreme Court of Justice. The highest court in the Uruguayan judiciary, in proceedings brought to seek a declaration of unconstitutionality in respect of a law forbidding police officers to exercise the right to strike and to occupy workplaces, recalled that article 8 (2) of the Covenant provides that "This article shall not prevent the imposition of lawful restrictions on the exercise of these rights by members of the armed forces or of the police or of the administration of the State".

II. Issues relating to the general provisions of the Covenant (arts. 1-5)

2. Please provide information on the budgetary resources allocated to social expenditure and their implementation during the last five years, in particular in the areas of employment, social security, housing, health and education, indicating what percentage of the total national budget and of gross domestic product (GDP) each budget line represents.

2. Estimates of public social expenditure in Uruguay are prepared jointly by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, the Office of Planning and Budgeting and the Ministry of Social Development. As these estimates are now being revised and updated, the information below is for the period 2005-2013.

3. In 2013, social security and social assistance expenditure accounted for 49.5 per cent of the total, while health and education expenditure accounted for 24.3 per cent and 17.9 per cent, respectively. Between 2005 and 2013, the most significant change in the distribution of public social expenditure by component was the increase in health expenditure, which rose from 17 per cent of the total in 2005 to 24 per cent in 2013.

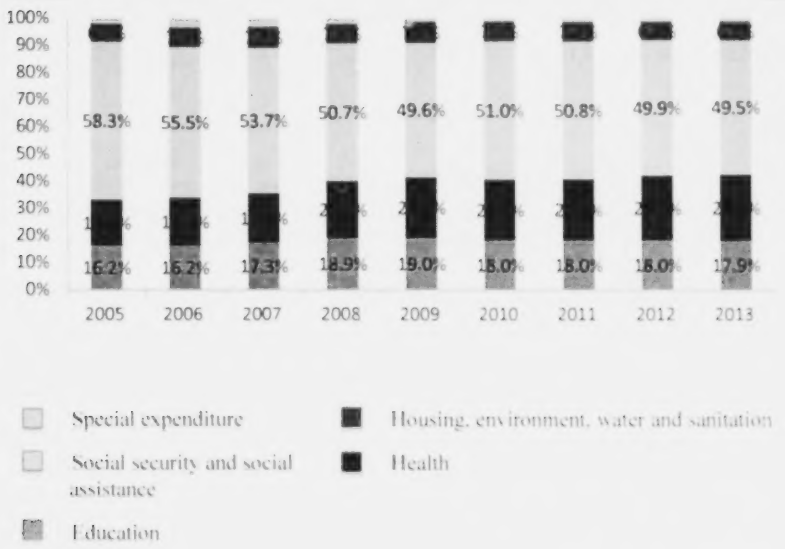
Table 1

Distribution of public social expenditure by component, in thousands of Uruguayan pesos and percentages Year: 2013[1]

	Thousands of pesos	*Percentage*
Total	**296 123 557**	**100.0**
Education	53 095 065	17.9
Health	72 016 948	24.3
Social security and social assistance	146 476 712	49.5
Housing, environment, water and sanitation	20 478 745	6.9
Special expenditure	4 056 087	1.4

Figure 1

Changes in the percentage distribution of public social expenditure by component, 2005-2013[2]

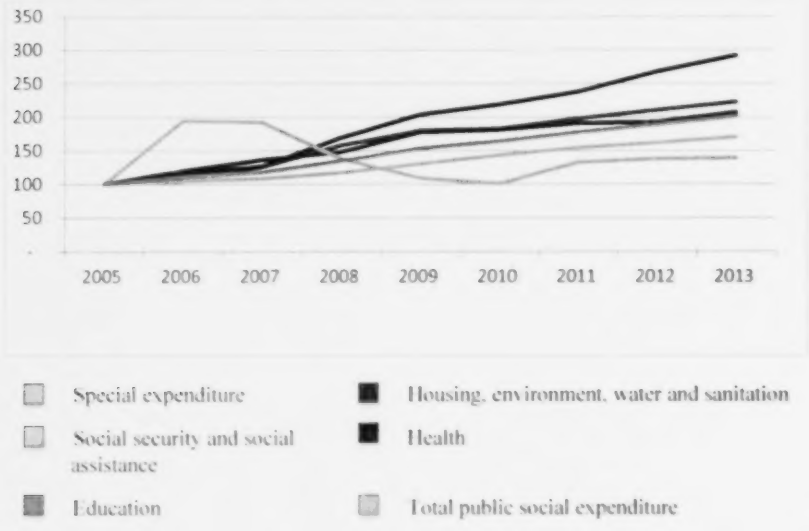


[1] *Source*: Ministry of Social Development, National Directorate of Evaluation and Monitoring (preliminary data)

[2] *Source*: Ministry of Social Development, National Directorate of Evaluation and Monitoring (preliminary data)

Figure 2

Changes in real public social expenditure (total and main components), 2005-2013[3]
Index: 2005=100

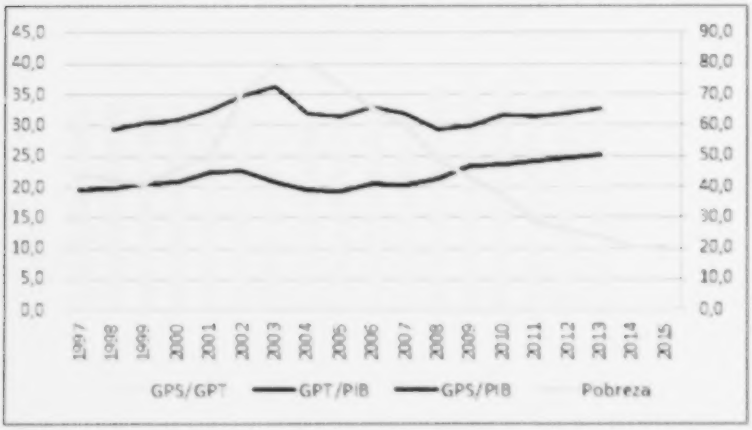


4. Public social expenditure grew by an average of 8.1 per cent per year, with the result that its cumulative real growth between 2005 and 2013 was 101.1 per cent. This expansion was driven largely by a nearly 200-per-cent real increase in health expenditure and a 122.4-per-cent increase in education expenditure over that nine-year period.

5. As a clear illustration of the importance that the country attaches to social policies, their macroeconomic priority (public social expenditure as a percentage of the economy's gross domestic product) increased over the period, reaching 25 per cent in 2013. An increase in fiscal priority (public social expenditure as a percentage of total public expenditure) was also observed.

Figure 3

Macroeconomic priority, fiscal priority and poverty headcount[4]



[3] See footnote 2

[4] *Source*: Ministry of Social Development, National Directorate of Evaluation and Monitoring (preliminary data). Primary axis: poverty, public social expenditure/gross domestic product, total public expenditure/gross domestic product; secondary axis: public social expenditure/total public expenditure.

3. **Please provide information on measures taken to increase real tax receipts with a view to increasing resources for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights and tackling socioeconomic inequalities.**

6. The key measure for increasing the country's tax receipts was taken in 2007 with the adoption of Act No. 18083, which was intended to promote social equity by linking the tax burden to taxpayers' capacity to pay. Thus far, this reform has been aimed at reducing social equity gaps. Now the challenge is to achieve fiscal consolidation through measures in the areas of both expenditure and revenue.

7. Subsequent adjustments have included new regulations pertaining to the law on investments, a targeted reduction of the value-added tax and adjustments in the individual income and social security tax.[5] These measures, which are in line with the aforementioned objective, are intended to make use of tax instruments to shore up economic growth.

8. The replies provided herein include information on the development of the social protection system through an expenditure policy that focuses on social equity.

4. **Please indicate whether the State party is executing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and explain how it intends to make sure that the implementation of the Agenda will take into account the Covenant obligations, ensuring that no one is excluded from exercising his or her economic, social and cultural rights.**

9. In March 2016, the President of the Republic launched the Social Dialogue, a wide-ranging and inclusive Uruguayan social forum whose purpose is to generate inputs in various areas and on various topics for the design of a national development strategy that is sustainable over the medium and long terms, taking account in particular of the Sustainable Development Goals. The dialogue was conducted by means of round-table discussions in which 2,500 people took part, and 11 reports were prepared on the topics discussed. In the coming months, the final report on the Social Dialogue process will be issued and will serve as a key document for future public policymaking, including the achievement of the goals and targets adopted under the 2030 Agenda.

10. It should also be noted, in this regard, that the Directorate of Planning of the Office of Planning and Budgeting works with the same time horizon (2030) as the Social Dialogue, and is completing the process of designing a mechanism for monitoring the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal targets and indicators, in coordination with the institutions most closely involved in the implementation of public policies and having the technical capacities to perform that work.

Non-discrimination (art. 2 (2))

5. **In view of the information given in the State party's report (see E/C.12/URY/5, para. 17), please indicate whether comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation has been enacted. Please also provide information on the legal mechanisms in place to prevent, combat and punish all forms of discrimination, both direct and indirect. Please also indicate whether an independent mechanism has been established to receive complaints of discrimination and, if so, provide information on the number of complaints investigated, prosecutions launched and sanctions imposed.**

11. In 2003, Uruguay adopted Act No. 17677 on incitement to or commission of acts of hatred, contempt or violence against specified persons, which sets out criminal penalties for perpetrators of such offences; in 2004, it adopted Act No. 17817 on combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination, which established the Honorary Commission against Racism, Xenophobia and All Other Forms of Discrimination; and in 2013, it adopted Act No. 19122 (https://www.impo.com.uy/bases/leyes/19122-2013/4), for which a regulatory decree was adopted in 2014 (https://www.impo.com.uy/bases/decretos/144-2014) and

[5] Tax on the Income of Natural Persons/Social Security Tax (*Impuesto a las Rentas de las Personas Físicas Impuesto de Asistencia a la Seguridad Social*).

which establishes rules for the promotion of educational and work opportunities for people of African descent.

12. A number of mechanisms have been established to receive complaints of discrimination on any grounds, especially in the public sphere. For the purposes of the present report, the Honorary Commission against Racism, Xenophobia and All Other Forms of Discrimination and the National Human Rights Institution and Ombudsman's Office are especially worthy of note.

13. The Honorary Commission against Racism, Xenophobia and All Other Forms of Discrimination has been in operation since 2007. Consisting of representatives of State institutions and non-governmental organizations with recognized experience in combating racism and xenophobia, it has as its principal mandate the tasks set out in the relevant Act (https://www.impo.com.uy/bases/leyes/17817-2004), while its powers are defined in the relevant regulatory decree (https://www.impo.com.uy/bases/decretos/152-2006).

14. The Commission has the authority to issue opinions, but not to impose penalties or fines, as those powers are exclusively within the remit of the judiciary, the General Inspectorate of Labour (in labour-related matters) or the appropriate institutions in the case of administrative investigations or inquiries. The number of complaints received between 2007 and 2016 was 236, of which 44 were received in the last two years. In addition, the Commission reported to the judiciary on five occasions.

15. In conformity with the guidelines set out in the Paris Principles, the National Human Rights Institution and Ombudsman's Office was established as an independent State body operating within the legislative branch.

16. According to information published by the Institution,[6] in 2015 a total of 152 complaints were received (as compared to 176 in 2014 and 260 in 2013), of which 26 were related to violations of the right to equal treatment and non-discrimination, primarily on grounds of sexual diversity, gender and race or ethnicity.

17. As the mandates in this regard are shared, the Institution's action on racial discrimination complaints is coordinated primarily with the Commission in order to avoid duplication of effort. As mentioned above, in considering and responding to the complaints received, these bodies interact in coordination with other State authorities such as the General Inspectorate of Labour and Social Security (Ministry of Labour and Social Security) and with municipal authorities such as the Office of the Community Ombudsman of the Department of Montevideo.

6. Please provide information and statistical data on the impact of specific measures taken to combat structural discrimination against persons of African descent and indigenous peoples. Specifically, please provide information on the impact of the implementation of Act No. 19122 of 21 August 2013 on the promotion of educational and work opportunities for people of African descent.

18. Following the adoption of the regulatory decree for Act No. 19122, the monitoring committee for the Act drew up a plan of action for 2015-2020 in consultation with civil society. Since then, representatives of the National Civil Service Office and the Office of Planning and Budgeting have joined the monitoring committee, and in 2015 the Civil Society Advisory Council was established.

19. The impact of the affirmative-action law in the first two years of its implementation has been uneven. Whereas the target for scholarships has been amply exceeded, the percentages stipulated for employment quotas have not yet been reached. In the area of education, data from the National Scholarship Office of the Ministry of Education and Culture show a considerable increase in the number of scholarships awarded to students of African descent since 2011. With respect to scholarships for secondary education, the percentages reached were 1.39 per cent in 2011, 9.31 per cent in 2014 and 19.02 per cent in 2016. For tertiary education, a cross-check of scholarship data and university census data

[6] http://inddhh.gub.uy/informe-anual-2015/

shows that 13 per cent of scholarship recipients identify themselves as persons of African descent.

20. The National Civil Service Office, meanwhile, reports that compliance with the employment quota stipulated by law continues to fall short. In 2014, persons of African descent accounted for 1.1 per cent of the country's civil service recruits (1.7 per cent in the executive branch, 1.1 per cent in the judicial branch, 0.4 per cent in departmental governments and 0 per cent in the legislative branch). More recent data taken from the performance report for 2015 show that this overall proportion increased by 143.5 per cent as a result of improved compliance with the quota, with persons of African descent accounting for 2.71 per cent of civil service recruits (4.82 per cent in the executive branch, 1.53 per cent in the judicial branch, 0.5 per cent in departmental governments and 0 per cent in the legislative branch).

21. Lastly, in 2016, Uruguayans of African descent accounted for 10 per cent of those who applied for recruitment to the civil service, whereas in 2015 they had accounted for 7 per cent. Recently, at the proposal of the National Civil Service Office, a policy change was made whereby the agencies of the central Administration will not be authorized to fill civil service positions until they have reported on how they intend to ensure compliance with the quota established in Act No. 19122.

7. **Please provide information and statistical data on the impact of the measures taken to combat discrimination against persons with disabilities. Please also provide information on the impact of the measures taken to combat discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and/or gender identity, particularly with respect to access to employment, education and health services, including sexual and reproductive health services.**

22. The authorities recently launched the National Plan on Access to Justice and Legal Protection for Persons with Disabilities, 2015-2020. The Plan sets out cross-cutting, coordinated strategic actions that go beyond the development of specific plans, programmes and measures targeting this group in particular. The Plan is based on articles 12 and 13 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and its implementation and follow-up will be evaluated in the near future.

23. With regard to policies to combat discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, quotas for transgender persons have continued to be implemented in various State programmes, and an agreement was reached with the LGBT Chamber of Commerce, and specifically with the company IBM, to include 10 transgender persons in the company's in-house training and selection process.

24. The National Council on Sexual Diversity has developed a proposal on a comprehensive law for transgender persons, which will soon be submitted for adoption by the legislature.

Equal rights of men and women (art. 3)

8. **Please provide information on the remaining challenges impeding the achievement of gender equality following the implementation of the National Plan for Equal Opportunities and Rights (2007-2011). Please provide examples of how measures to combat gender inequality are being incorporated into public policies by the National Institute for Women and the competent ministries.**

25. The obstacles and barriers to gender equality are numerous and complex, and they reflect structural factors that are deeply rooted in society. For the period 2015-2020, the authorities have reaffirmed the importance of the National Gender Council as the focal point for prioritizing gender policy, developing proposals, setting priorities and guiding actions to promote equality between women and men. For the current period, the basic workplan for 2015-2020 (http://www.inmujeres.gub.uy/innovaportal/file/22379/1/documento-base-eng-2015-2020.pdf) outlines seven areas of work for the development of the national gender policy: (i) the right to a life free of gender-based violence, (ii) the right

to an education and culture free of gender stereotypes, (iii) the right to a healthy life, (iv) the right to better development opportunities in the world of productive employment and business, (v) the right to quality employment and skills development, (vi) the right to care and social protection, and (vii) the right to civic engagement.

26. In the area of gender mainstreaming in public policies, each of the institutions belonging to the National Gender Council has developed measures and undertaken efforts to prioritize strategies for protecting women's rights, primarily in terms of career development and prevention of workplace sexual harassment. To this end, action plans have been adopted in accordance with Act No. 18561 and written procedures have been established for addressing situations responsibly and confidentially.

27. Lastly, in November 2015, the adoption of Act No. 19353 resulted in the establishment of the Integrated National Care System, which has as one of its principles "the inclusion of gender and generational perspectives, taking into account the different needs of women, men and specific age groups, while promoting cultural changes geared to overcoming the sexual division of labour and ensuring that caregiving tasks are shared among all actors in society".

III. Issues relating to specific provisions of the Covenant (arts. 6-15)

Right to work (art. 6)

9. **Please provide statistical information, disaggregated by age, sex, disability, ethnic or national origin and urban/rural area of residence, on the employment situation in the State party. Please also provide further information on the implementation, outcome and evaluation of the steps taken to increase employment, particularly for young people. In this regard, please report on the results of the implementation of Act No. 19133 on the promotion of youth employment and of the "Uruguay at Work" programme.**

28. Rates of activity, employment and unemployment for the country as a whole showed a clearly positive trend between 2006 and 2015. The activity rate rose by 3.1 per cent as a result of increased participation by women, whose activity rate rose from 50.8 per cent in 2006 to 55.4 per cent in 2015.

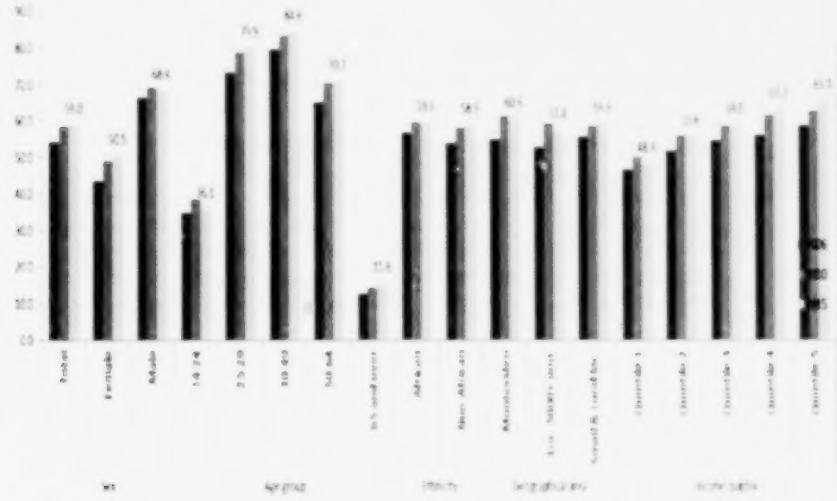
29. Moreover, in all of those years, the employment rate for people of African descent was slightly higher than the rate for the rest of the population. In 2006, the rate was 56.8 per cent for people of African descent and 53.9 per cent for the rest of the population; in 2010 it was 59.8 per cent and 58.3 per cent, respectively, and in 2015 it was 59.6 per cent and 58.9 per cent, respectively. The gap between the two groups narrowed over the period, as employment grew faster among people not of African descent than among people of African descent.

30. With regard to regional disparities, inequality in employment rates is also observed among different departments. The departments in the southern part of the country have the highest levels of employment, with rates above 60 per cent. At the other extreme, the lowest employment rates are seen in the northern departments (Paysandú, with a rate of 53.1 per cent; Treinta y Tres, with 53.2 per cent; and Cerro Largo, with 53.4 per cent).

31. Nevertheless, despite generally favourable trends, employment rates vary among different population groups. The figure below shows the employment rate by sex, age group, racial or ethnic background, geographical area and per capita income quintile for the country as a whole, 2006-2010 and 2015.[7]

[7] *Source*: Ministry of Social Development, National Directorate of Evaluation and Monitoring, based on the continuous household survey administered by the National Statistical Institute.

Figure 4



32. Information on activity, employment and unemployment can be found in the most recent statistical publication prepared by the National Statistical Institute (http://www.ine.gub.uy/documents/10181/30865/ECH+Diciembre+2016/99c3ad13-0fe8-406a-ae99-7ba7699f75c6) on the basis of the continuous household survey.

33. Lastly, in relation to the "Uruguay at Work" programme, 3,081 people participated in 2015, 3,340 in 2014, 3,381 in 2013, 3,379 in 2012 and 3,288 in 2011. On average, women accounted for 73 per cent of the participants over that period. The percentage distribution of participants by age is balanced, as shown in the table below.[5]

Table 2

	2011	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*
Ages 18-29	44.6%	44.7%	48.9%	51.0%	51.1%
Ages 30-65	55.4%	55.3%	51.1%	49.0%	48.9%
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

10. Please provide information on the impact of the Programme for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Women in Employment and Vocational Training (PROIMUJER) run by the National Employment and Vocational Training Institute and of other steps taken to combat vertical and horizontal gender-based segregation in the labour market and to eliminate the wage gap between men and women.

34. In terms of employment, the female activity rate (percentage of economically active women out of the entire working-age female population) in the country's urban areas rose by 9 per cent (or 4.6 percentage points) between 2006 and 2015. Over the same period, the informal-sector employment rate declined among both women and men, although the decrease was 33.3 per cent for women and 26.1 per cent for men. As a result, since 2012, the rate of non-registration in the social security system has been higher for men (25.5 per

[5] *Source:* Monitoring by the Ministry of Social Development, National Directorate of Evaluation and Monitoring.

cent) than for women (23.8 per cent). In terms of gender equity in the labour market, however, women's employment continues to be concentrated in a relatively small number of specific occupations and sectors. Services, sales and unskilled labour (including domestic work) account for more than half (52 per cent) of the occupations in which women predominate. Commerce, household services, social and health services and education are the fields with the highest concentration of women.

Right to just and favourable conditions of work (art. 7)

11. Please provide more information on the impact of measures taken to improve the working conditions of domestic workers in the State party, including migrant domestic workers. Please provide information on labour inspections carried out in this sector and their outcome. Also provide information on the number of reported cases of labour abuse and exploitation, investigations carried out and sanctions imposed.

35. According to information provided by the Social Insurance Bank, which coordinates State social insurance services and manages the social security system, 71,953 domestic workers were registered in the social security system in 2015. The increase in registration among workers in this sector was faster than the increase in the total number of participants.[9]

Table 3

Year	*Total registered participants*	*Cumulative change (%)*	*Registered domestic workers*	*Cumulative change (%)*
2009	1 266 259	-	54 618	-
2010	1 329 109	5.0	57 403	5.1
2011	1 388 233	9.6	61 024	11.7
2012	1 440 521	13.8	64 381	17.9
2013	1 464 054	15.6	66 531	21.8
2014	1 477 130	16.7	68 402	25.2
2015	1 468 660	16.0	71 953	31.7

36. Evasion of social security contributions remains a persistent problem in relation to domestic workers, however, and is worse in this sector than in other participating sectors.[10]

Table 4

Participating sector	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*	*2015**
Domestic workers	51.75	48.32	43.74	38.01
Industry and trade	18.71	18.37	17.36	18.15
Construction	26.67	25.92	29.99	34.82
Total	**19.45**	**18.67**	**17.65**	**17.95**

37. Recognizing that this level of informality, though decreasing each year, is depriving many people of subsidies such as maternity, sickness or unemployment benefits, as well as potential access to retirement benefits, the authorities have made continuous awareness-raising and inspection efforts with a view to further reducing informal employment among domestic workers. Thus, State bodies (the Social Insurance Bank, the Ministry of Labour

[9] *Source*: *Boletín Estadístico 2016*, Actuarial Economic Advisory Office-Social Security Advisory Office-Social Insurance Bank (AEA-AGSS-BPS), based on consolidated monthly data from the Tax Advisory and Revenue Service.

[10] *Source*: Bene, N., "Evasión en puestos de trabajo. Año 2014", in *Comentarios de Seguridad Social*, No. 50, fourth quarter 2015. * Preliminary data.

and Social Security and the Ministry of Social Development), in coordination with the workers' union and the Housewives' League in some cases, have conducted information and training campaigns focusing in particular on the relevant regulations, workers' rights and the professionalization of domestic work.

38. With regard to inspections, the table below presents information for each geographical area (Montevideo and the rest of the country) on the number of requests received, indicating whether any violations were found (as they were in more than 80 per cent of the cases over the period) and whether the inspection was prompted by a complaint or a retirement procedure initiated by the worker.[11]

Table 5

Results of requests for domestic-service inspections, 2007-2015

		Substantiated		*Not substantiated*		*Subtotal*		
Year	*Reason for inspection*	*Montevideo*	*Rest of country*	*Montevideo*	*Rest of country*	*Montevideo*	*Rest of country*	*Whole country*
2007	Complaint	825	155	160	23	985	178	1 163
	Retirement proc	43	63	14	11	57	74	131
2008	Complaint	417	244	72	20	489	264	753
	Retirement proc	57	49	16	9	73	58	131
2009	Complaint	329	133	81	17	410	150	560
	Retirement proc	52	87	22	9	74	96	170
2010	Complaint	374	152	60	16	434	168	602
	Retirement proc	73	105	22	18	95	123	218
2011	Complaint	261	116	41	10	302	126	428
	Retirement proc	63	106	29	24	92	130	222
2012	Complaint	272	150	77	20	349	170	519
	Retirement proc	94	148	37	21	131	169	300
2013	Complaint	260	150	53	27	313	177	490
	Retirement proc	104	162	46	50	150	212	362
2014*	Complaint	247	94	59	16	306	110	416
	Retirement proc	72	91	28	35	100	126	226
	Non-payment	78	0	20	0	98	0	98
2015	Complaint	180	27	45	11	225	38	263
	Retirement proc	34	32	23	7	57	39	96
	Non-payment	106	0	3	0	109	0	109

39. In addition, in 2016 the General Inspectorate of Labour and Social Security of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security visited 1,784 households, of which 79 per cent were in Montevideo and 21 per cent were elsewhere in the country. In 20 per cent (357) of these households, the inspections concerned domestic workers, 96.4 per cent of whom were women. The violations found included inability to produce any social security documentation at the time of the inspection (in 38 per cent of the cases), failure to produce wage receipts (36 per cent) and failure to provide work clothing (26 per cent).

40. With regard to migrant domestic workers formally registered in the system, as of November 2016, immigrants accounted for some 2.5 per cent of the 58,109 individuals registered with the Social Insurance Bank as domestic workers. The proportion is slightly higher among men (3.0 per cent) than women (2.5 per cent), although the latter represent

[11] *Source*: Technical Directorate of the Tax Advisory and Revenue Service. * Since 2014, internal inspections have been carried out in respect of missed payments by domestic-service contributors.

the overwhelming majority of domestic workers registered in the system (of whom 97.7 per cent are women and 2.3 per cent are men).

12. **Please provide information on measures taken to ensure the effective implementation of Act No. 19196 on workplace accidents and indicate whether a national policy on health and safety at work has been adopted. Please also provide information on the resources allocated to the General Inspectorate of Labour and specify whether the activities of the Inspectorate cover all workers, including those in the informal sector.**

41. The Corporate Criminal Responsibility Act (No. 19196) is now in force. With regard to the national policy on occupational safety and health, it should be noted that the National Occupational Health and Safety Council has agreed on a draft policy that extends the scope of Decree No. 128/2014 on occupational safety and health services (International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 161). Work in this area is also being done through the tripartite occupational safety and health commissions in the various sectors (construction, private health care, port services, pharmaceuticals, tolls, chemicals, metallurgy, supermarkets, rural sector, call centres, delivery services, the dairy industry and other public-sector industries), which have taken information and training initiatives and developed policy proposals.

13. **Please provide information on measures taken to ensure effective compliance with the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.**

42. As noted in the country's fifth periodic report, since 2008 the Tripartite Equal Employment Opportunities Commission of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security has promoted the inclusion of gender equality clauses in the negotiations conducted by the wage boards, emphasizing equal pay for work of equal value, equal access to quality jobs and training, elimination of discrimination in selection and promotion processes, guarantees and protections for maternity and responsibility-sharing, and prevention and punishment of sexual and psychological harassment.

43. Despite the progress made, challenges remain in terms of achieving gender equity in the labour market. Women's employment is concentrated in a relatively small number of specific occupations and sectors. Services, sales and unskilled labour (including domestic work) account for more than half (52 per cent) of the occupations in which women predominate, together with social and health services and education.

44. In particular, the average hourly wage of women amounts to 91 per cent of that of men. Women's hourly wages are lower than men's at all levels of educational attainment. That gap increases along with the number of years of education. Except in agriculture and fisheries; electricity, gas and water; transport; public administration and defence; and construction, in most fields the hourly earnings of men exceed those of women.

Trade union rights (art. 8)

14. **Please provide information about the way in which the right to strike and the right to collective bargaining are recognized in the laws of the State party and about the safeguards in place to ensure that these rights can be exercised effectively and in accordance with article 8 of the Covenant.**

45. The wage board mechanism was established in 1943. Through tripartite negotiation, agreement is reached on important matters concerning wage adjustments, minimum wages and working conditions. The number of subgroups involved in the wage boards has gradually increased, reaching 241 in 2015 and covering nearly 900,000 workers. In the latest round of negotiations, which ended in December 2013, 86 per cent of the agreements were reached by consensus among the three parties.

Right to social security (art. 9)

15. Please provide information on steps taken by the State party to ensure that workers in the informal economy, and also asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, have access to social security.

46. The tables below (http://www.bps.gub.uy/8698/libro-45---julio---setiembre.html) are intended to supplement the information provided in the fifth periodic report and to quantify changes in the number of enterprises and workers under the single-tax and social single-tax regimes. It should be noted that the information for the years from 2012 onward includes enterprises under the social (Ministry of Social Development) single-tax regime.

Table 6
Number of single-tax enterprises with payroll

Year	*General regime*	*Social single tax*	*Total*
2012	20 998	393	21 391
2013	22 825	709	23 534
2014	23 878	1 252	25 130
2015	25 046	2 194	27 240

Table 7
Number of persons enrolled in the single-tax regime

Year	*Contributor regime*	*Social single tax*	*Total*
2012	23 145	460	23 605
2013	25 139	788	25 927
2014	26 213	1 389	27 602
2015	27 470	2 426	29 896

16. Please provide information on the coverage of non-contributory programmes and indicate whether the level of benefits is sufficient to ensure an adequate standard of living.

47. An older person is considered to be covered by the social security system if he or she receives at least an old-age, disability or survivor's benefit. Below are estimates of the covered population out of the total number of persons aged 65 or above.

Table 8
Uruguayan social security scheme. Coverage of persons aged 65 or above
(Percentages)[13]

	Retirees and pensioners 65 or above	*Old-age and disability pensioners 65 or above*	*Total*
2004	88.83	4.40	93.23
2005	88.82	4.43	93.25
2006	88.78	4.53	93.30
2007	87.92	4.70	92.62
2008	87.35	5.47	92.82
2009	88.14	5.85	93.99
2010	89.14	6.11	95.26

[12] *Source*: Information systems of the Tax Advisory and Revenue Service. CSDA search set 3.881.
[13] Same as above.
[14] *Source*: A. Lazo. "Analisis de cobertura del regimen previsional uruguayo 2004-2014" in BPS-AGSS. *Comentarios de Seguridad Social*. No. 50. 2015. [15] Includes old-age assistance for the years from 2008 onward. [16] Updated information.

	[illegible]	[illegible]	
	[illegible]	[illegible]	
2011	90.35	6.27	96.62
2012	91.12	6.16	97.29
2013	91.21	6.19	97.41
2014	91.96	6.27	98.24
2015[1]	92.24	6.37	98.61

48. With regard to the adequacy of the level of benefits from non-contributory schemes, it should be noted that the ratio of the average non-contributory pension to the poverty line increased between 2006 and 2015, and benefits showed a recovery in purchasing power over that period. In 2006, the value of the average pension was equivalent to 60 per cent of the value of the average per capita basic food basket; by 2015, it had reached 83 per cent. The index of the real value of the average non-contributory pension shows that its purchasing power increased by 50 per cent between 2006 and 2015.

Table 9

Value of old-age and disability pensions in terms of the poverty line, and index of the average pension in real terms[1]

[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
2006	103.9	174.6	0.60	100.0
2007	119.3	193.8	0.62	103.6
2008	154.8	239.6	0.65	110.9
2009	164.1	241.8	0.68	118.5
2010	206.8	284.7	0.73	124.5
2011	238.3	327.7	0.73	127.8
2012	257.5	349.1	0.74	134.3
2013	289.0	367.8	0.79	140.0
2014	286.7	353.7	0.81	144.8
2015	274.7	330.0	0.83	150.0

Protection of the family, mothers and children (art. 10)

17. **Please provide updated information, including disaggregated statistics, on the prevalence of child labour in the State party. In this respect, provide information on: (a) the results of measures taken to prevent the involvement of children under the age of 15 in child labour; (b) the impact of measures taken to prevent the involvement of children in dangerous work; and (c) specific steps taken to protect children from all forms of abuse and/or exploitation.**

49. Policies for improving the living conditions of children and adolescents were continued and intensified under the National Strategy for Children and Adolescents. While these policies are not specifically geared to preventing and eradicating child labour, they have had an impact on this problem. Examples of such policies include the initiative to

[1] Current values (in Uruguayan pesos) expressed by the annual average selling exchange rate.

[2] *Boletín Estadístico 2016*. AUA-BPS, p. 163.

[3] Prepared on the basis of the total basic food basket (poverty line method, 2006) and the National Statistical Institute's continuous household survey.

[4] Current values (in Uruguayan pesos) deflated by the annual average consumer price index and expressed as indices.

make education compulsory for all children from the age of 4 to the lower secondary cycle, the basic education plan, community classrooms, targeted provision of the family allowance and the Social Uruguay card. Also worthy of note are the Uruguay Grows with You programme, the programme for strengthening the capacities of families (Near Neighbours), the Youth Network, the I Study and Work programme, child and family care centres, and training and production centres.

50. The Committee for the Eradication of Child Labour continues to work on the basis of the priorities agreed upon in "Actions for preventing and eradicating child labour and protecting permitted adolescent labour in Uruguay, 2015-2020": child labour and hazardous adolescent labour, rural labour, intensive domestic labour and formalization of permitted adolescent labour. On this last subject, the formalization of private-sector employment among 16- to 18-year-olds increased by 120 per cent between 2004 and 2014 (with 14,000 adolescents working in the private sector in 2014, compared to 5,700 in 2004). In 2015, the Uruguayan Institute for Children and Adolescents conducted 3,032 labour inspections nationwide and granted 3,132 work permits, which formalize adolescent labour while ensuring that adolescents remain in the education system.

51. The table below shows data on child labour (among children under the age of 15) registered with the Social Insurance Bank (http://www.bps.gub.uy/1940/evolucion-de-los-cotizantes.html).

Table 10

Average annual number of payroll jobs for which social security contributions were paid,* by age group. Annual average based on payment month[a]

Year	0-15	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70 and over	Total
2004	286	5 826	80 969	115 553	230 151	239 845	177 194	60 766	10 402	920 991
2005	293	7 664	95 286	124 833	245 073	250 670	188 045	66 861	10 846	989 571
2006	305	8 721	108 220	132 622	263 141	260 668	200 322	73 339	11 357	1 058 694
2007	288	10 319	121 410	139 724	280 028	268 022	211 504	78 014	11 863	1 121 171
2008	241	11 588	134 409	147 333	300 168	278 088	223 732	83 187	12 239	1 190 984
2009	213	11 075	136 414	148 665	311 000	283 298	232 053	85 831	12 558	1 221 107
2010	186	12 199	146 064	157 099	329 497	295 936	245 198	86 860	12 958	1 285 996
2011	200	13 764	154 710	165 902	345 313	307 031	258 190	88 761	13 236	1 347 106
2012	320	15 136	160 662	173 031	361 555	318 717	273 145	90 306	13 716	1 406 586
2013	258	15 184	162 945	177 271	371 159	326 525	285 370	92 985	14 167	1 445 863
2014	226	14 266	161 653	180 392	377 444	332 853	294 112	97 104	14 824	1 472 873
2015	198	11 892	153 035	177 527	374 749	336 396	298 439	100 944	15 421	1 468 602

18. **Please provide an assessment of the impact of measures taken to combat domestic violence, and of the remaining challenges in punishing those responsible, protecting victims and preventing cases of domestic violence.**

52. The results achieved through the National Consultative Council on Domestic Violence include, in particular:

- Adoption of Decree No. 306/015, "Action Plan 2016-2019 for a life free of gender-based violence, with a generational perspective", with the aim of helping to consolidate a national public policy to prevent, address and reduce gender-based violence in its various concrete manifestations and to assist victims of such violence;
- Introduction and legislative consideration of the comprehensive bill to guarantee women a life free of gender-based violence.

[a] Source: Prepared on the basis of payroll DW, Tax Advisory and Revenue Service. * Excludes unpaid entrepreneurs.

53. Listed below are some relevant figures from entities of the inter-agency system for comprehensively responding to gender-based violence:

- National Institute for Women: The gender-based violence response system provided services to 1,978 women and 189 men between January and September 2016.
- Ministry of the Interior: The police received 24,454 domestic violence complaints between January and October 2016, and ordered the placement of 280 electronic devices (ankle monitors) between January and September 2016.
- Ministry of Health: The 113 domestic violence referral teams were redefined and guidelines for emergency-room care to address situations of acute violence were prepared for use in emergency services throughout the country.
- Uruguayan Institute for Children and Adolescents: The Institute currently has 28 local reception committees under the integrated system for protecting children and adolescents from violence.
- Social Insurance Bank: In 2016, the Bank covered 100 per cent of the demand for psychological care for persons orphaned by domestic violence, with six new cases in the capital and five in one northern department. Between January and October 2016, it also granted 82 special family allowances and 192 pensions to persons orphaned by domestic violence.

54. It should be noted that a new system of criminal procedure will enter into force throughout the country on 16 July 2017. Among the changes included in the new Code of Criminal Procedure are the concept of the "victim" (which was not included in the previous code) and a redefinition of the role of the Attorney General's Office to include the duty to "protect and assist victims and witnesses of offences, as well as victims of domestic violence, gender-based violence and generational violence, and children and adolescents whose rights are under threat or have been violated". In addition, one of the strategic objectives of the Attorney General's Office for the period 2015-2019 is to help design a public policy for the eradication of gender and generational violence and to intervene in court for the protection of victims.

55. Lastly, it should be noted that the legislature will soon adopt the bill on femicide, which incorporates this concept into article 312 of the Criminal Code as a special aggravating circumstance in homicide cases involving the killing of a woman for reasons of hatred or contempt. The amendment also includes, as a special aggravating circumstance, homicide as an act of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnic origin, disability or other status.

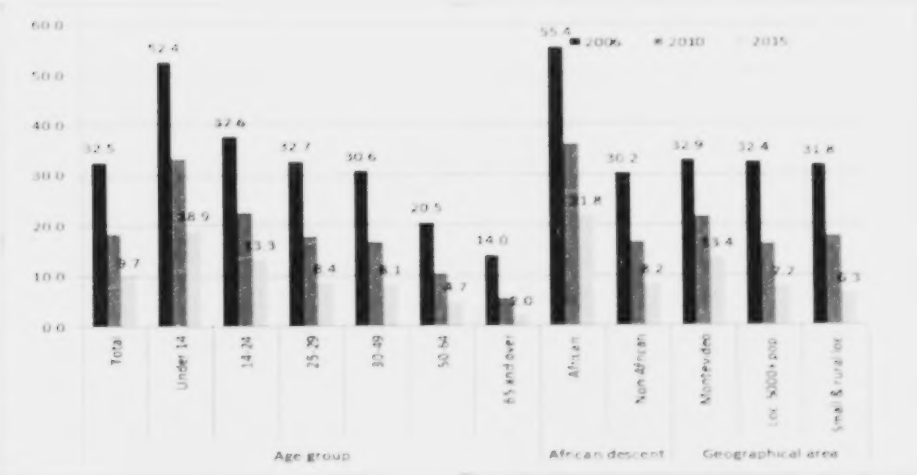
Right to an adequate standard of living (art. 11)

19. Please provide disaggregated statistics on the extent of poverty in the State party and indicate what specific action has been taken to combat the poverty experienced in particular by children and adolescents, persons of African descent and indigenous peoples, as well as other disadvantaged and marginalized groups.

56. The proportion of people living in poverty has declined over the past 10 years, from 32.5 per cent in 2006 to 9.7 per cent in 2016. An analysis of poverty in relation to various characteristics shows that poverty rates tend to be higher among children, people of African descent and residents of the country's capital, as shown in figure 5.[17]

[17] *Source*: Ministry of Social Development, National Directorate of Evaluation and Monitoring, based on the continuous household survey administered by the National Statistical Institute.

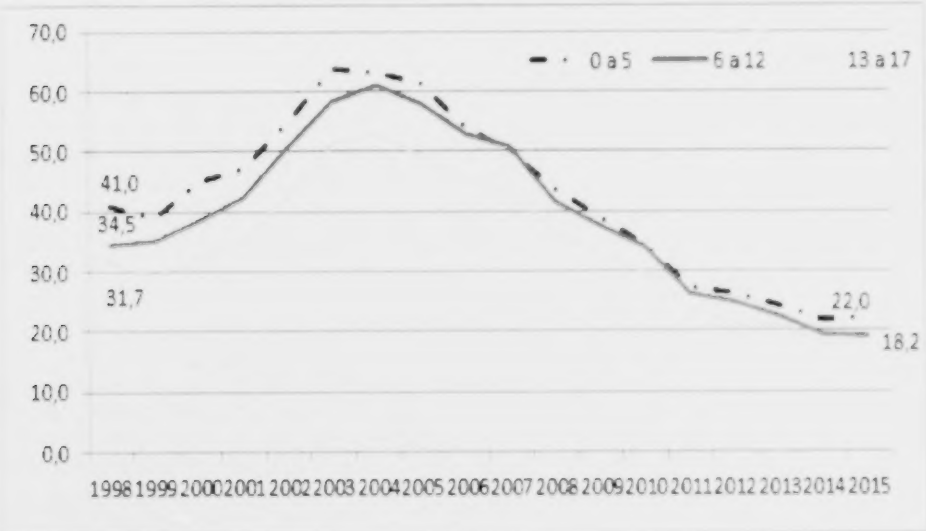
Figure 5



57. Figure 6 shows the decrease in the percentage of children and adolescents living in poverty. In 2015, this percentage reached its lowest point in almost two decades.

Figure 6

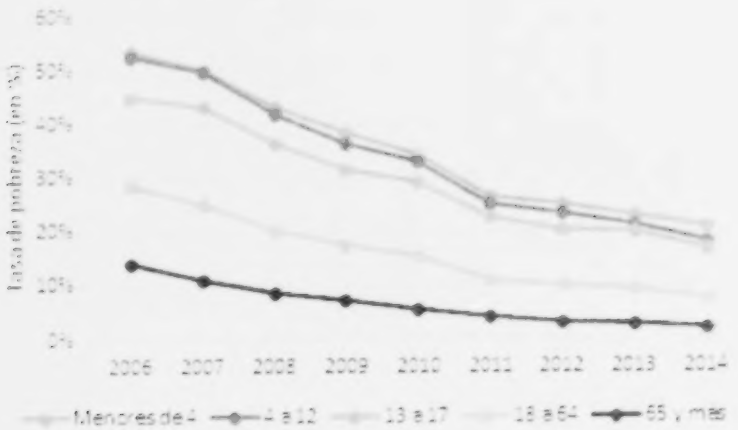
Percentage of children living in poverty, by age group. Urban areas, 1998-2015 [15]



58. Nonetheless, while the proportion of people living below the poverty line has steadily declined, children under the age of 4 continue to be the age group in which this proportion is highest: one in five such children is living in poverty (20.9 per cent).

[15] *Source*: Ministry of Social Development, National Directorate of Evaluation and Monitoring, based on the continuous household survey administered by the National Statistical Institute.

Figure 7
Poverty rates by age group, 2006-2014[19]



20. **Please provide information on the impact of Act No. 18795 on access to social housing and its role in reducing the shortage of social housing. Please provide disaggregated statistical information on access to adequate and affordable housing, in particular for the most disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups and for low-income groups.**

59. The purpose of Act No. 18795 is to promote housing construction by providing tax exemptions, thereby promoting the development of inner-city areas and optimizing State investments in services. By providing such exemptions to private investors for the construction, expansion or renovation of housing, this programme has enabled middle- and low-middle-income families to buy or rent a home. Between the time of the law's adoption and June 2015, these measures promoted the development of 11,311 social housing units (70 per cent of them in Montevideo), of which 15.71 per cent have been completed and 51.55 per cent are under construction.

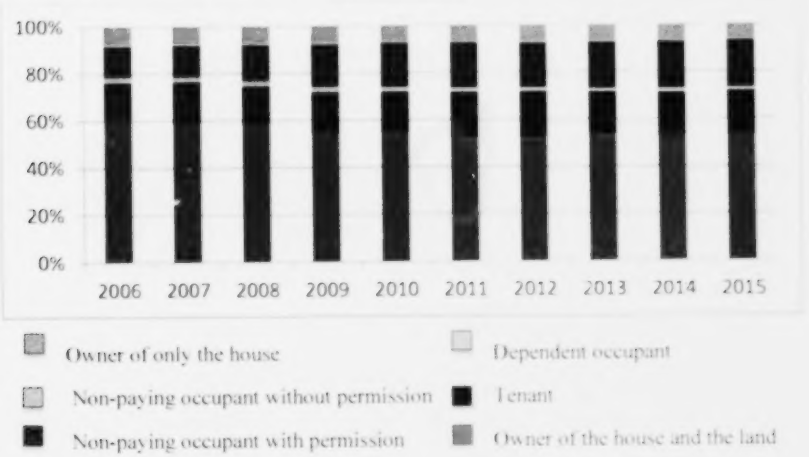
60. At the same time, a mortgage guarantee fund was created to provide individuals with partial guarantees to facilitate access to housing for those families that can pay a monthly instalment but do not have enough savings to purchase housing by means of a mortgage loan.

61. The different forms of housing tenure afford different degrees of legal protection with regard to rights of ownership or use. The most common form of tenure among Uruguayan households is ownership of both the house and the land. The most insecure situations are those in which the house and the land are occupied without permission or the occupant owns the house but not the land.

[19] *Source*: Original tabulation based on continuous household survey microdata from 2006-2014.

Figure 8

Percentage distribution of households by type of housing tenure. Whole country[20]

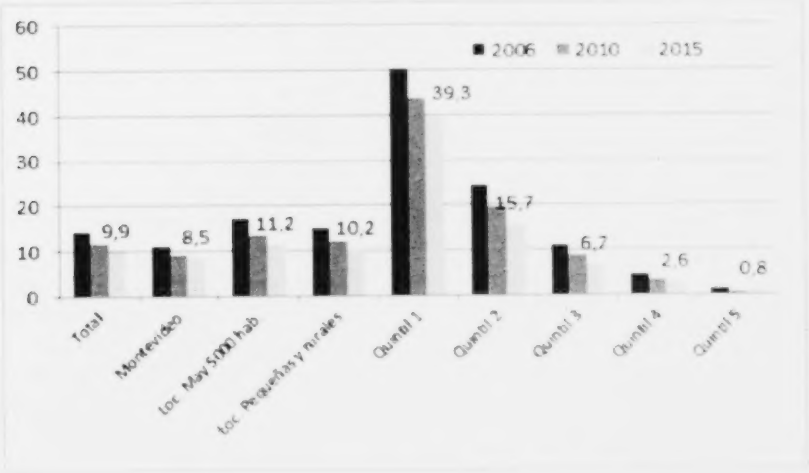


62. Overcrowding is one of the criteria for gauging the habitability of housing, as it refers to whether or not the housing has enough room to give the members of the household both privacy and space in which to carry out their daily activities.

63. Progress has been made in recent years, as the proportion of households defined as overcrowded (with more than two people per room available as sleeping accommodation) decreased from 14.1 per cent in 2006 to 9.9 per cent in 2015. As shown in figure 9, however, the situation varies, depending primarily on household income level. In 2015, overcrowding still characterized some 40 per cent of the poorest households.

Figure 9

Percentage of households defined as overcrowded, by geographical area and per capita income quintile. Country total, 2006-2010 and 2015[21]



[20] *Source*: Ministry of Social Development, National Directorate of Evaluation and Monitoring, based on the continuous household survey administered by the National Statistical Institute.

[21] Same as above.

21. **Please provide information on steps taken to ensure that persons living in irregular settlements have access to adequate basic services and are not subjected to forced evictions.**

64. In 2012, the first study based on a comparison of information from the 2011 population census with data from the 2006 survey was conducted in order to assess changes in irregular urban settlements.

65. It was estimated that Uruguay had 589 irregular settlements, in which 165,271 people were living. Some 78 per cent of those residents were living in settlements in Montevideo and Canelones. The overall results of the study are summarized in the tables below.

Table 11
Summary of overall results

	Settlements	*Dwellings*	*Persons*
Total	**589**	**48 708**	**165 271**
Montevideo	332	31 921	112 101
Canelones	91	5 064	16 488
Rest of the country	166	11 723	36 682

Table 12
Comparison of results, 2006-2011

	Settlements	*Dwellings*	*Persons*
2006 survey	662	49 263	179 545
2011 survey	589	48 708	165 271
Inter-census change	-73	-555	-14 274
Inter-census growth rate	-11.00%	-1.10%	-8.00%
Average annual growth rate	-2.20%	-0.16%	-1.10%

Source: Survey of irregular settlements. Initial population and housing results from the 2011 census. Neighbourhood Improvement Programme. Evaluation and Monitoring Unit, 2012. Available at www.piai.gub.uy.

66. As irregular urban settlements in Uruguay are well consolidated, a rapid reduction in such settlements is unlikely to occur, even in a context of overall improvement in socioeconomic indicators. Regularization and relocation efforts between 2006 and 2011 were the main cause of the reduction in the total number of settlements: while 18 new settlements sprang up between 2006 and 2011, 91 settlements were regularized or relocated under government programmes over the same period.

67. New settlements have tended to be smaller than regularized or relocated settlements. In terms of population, while the new settlements have an average of 99 residents, settlements that have been regularized or relocated have an average of 430 residents.

68. On the basis of the stocktaking exercise for the five-year housing plan for 2010-2014, the Ministry of Housing, Land Management and the Environment has presented a five-year housing plan for 2015-2019: http://www.mvotma.gub.uy/el-ministerio/transparencia/plan-quinquenal-de-vivienda-2015-2019.html.

22. **In the light of paragraph 181 of the State party's report, please provide further information on the impact of the measures taken to improve water quality and to protect water resources. Please also provide information on progress made in ensuring universal access to safe drinking water and improving access to sanitation for all, in particular for persons living in irregular settlements.**

69. The progress made in ensuring universal access to safe drinking water and improving access to sanitation for all, in particular for persons living in irregular settlements, is outlined below (figures are current as of December 2015).

70. Access to safe drinking water:

- 1,135,000 drinking water connections;
- 15,000 km of drinking water networks;
- 400 towns supplied with drinking water;
- 300 villages and rural schools supplied with drinking water;
- Urban population coverage: 98.9 per cent;
- Total population coverage: 94.9 per cent.

71. Sanitation:

- 302,000 sewer connections;
- 3,500 km of sewer networks;
- 192 towns with sanitation;
- Urban population with sewer network coverage: 49.1 per cent;
- Total population with sewer network coverage: 44.8 per cent.

72. Actions to achieve universal service coverage:

- Consolidation of the drinking water supply plan for villages and rural schools: 300 new drinking water systems have been installed and are currently in the inspection, maintenance and monitoring phase;
- Regularization of water supply in settlements: annual average of 6,000 connections (upgraded and new), with participatory management;
- National sewer connection plan: financial support (full or partial subsidy) for the most vulnerable social groups;
- Tripartite agreements for the expansion of drinking water and sanitation networks;
- Joint efforts with the Ministry of Housing, Land Management and the Environment, the National Housing Agency and the Social Housing Property Board to provide drinking water and sanitation services to housing cooperatives.

Right to physical and mental health (art. 12)

23. **Please report on the steps taken by the State party to ensure that sexual and reproductive health facilities, services, goods and information are accessible for all women and teenage girls in all regions of the country. Please also report on the steps taken to prevent teenage pregnancies, including sexual and reproductive health awareness campaigns and educational programmes aimed at adolescents.**

73. With the adoption of Act No. 18426 on protection of the right to sexual and reproductive health, which promotes national policies and programmes based on the principles of universal primary sexual and reproductive health-care coverage, ensures the confidentiality and privacy of the services offered and provides for teacher training in sexual and reproductive rights education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels (with sex education carried out at all levels of the education system), the country took a major step forward in the area of sexual and reproductive rights.

74. Other advances made in recent years include the adoption of the law on voluntary termination of pregnancy and of Decree No. 009/2011, which ensures universal access to contraception by making condoms available (free of charge at public-sector facilities or with a small co-payment at private-sector facilities) through all Integrated National Health-Care System providers.

75. The State Health Services Administration, the country's largest provider of comprehensive health care, has fully implemented Act No. 18426 by strengthening primary care for the provision of contraception-related information and inputs; providing for skills upgrading and continuous training for health-care teams; offering sexual and reproductive health services throughout the country; making long-acting reversible contraception (subcutaneous implants) available throughout the country; including and promoting the use of female condoms; improving access to oral contraceptives (vouchers for monthly and/or quarterly refills); facilitating access to female and male condoms (vouchers and dispensation on demand without a prescription); and implementing community activities for the promotion of sexual and reproductive rights.

76. It must be acknowledged that challenges remain in terms of reducing inequalities in access to these benefits among specific population groups, such as rural women, women with disabilities and migrants.

24. Please provide further information on progress made towards drafting and adopting a new mental health act and indicate whether there are any plans to develop a national mental health policy. Please indicate, as appropriate, how the mental health act and/or policy are expected to improve the accessibility, availability and quality of appropriate mental health services throughout the State party. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendation (see E/C.12/URY/CO/3-4, para. 26), please provide information on the steps taken to improve living conditions in the Bernardo Etchepare and Santin Carlos Rossi psychiatric clinics.

77. The bill submitted by the executive branch in December 2015 was approved by the Senate in October 2016, but has not yet been approved by the House of Representatives. In line with international standards, the bill is intended to safeguard the right of all inhabitants of Uruguay to mental health protection, in line with the approach of respecting the human rights of all persons, particularly those with mental health disorders, under the Integrated National Health-Care System.

78. Steps will also be taken to promote the deinstitutionalization of persons with mental health disorders by gradually closing psychiatric and specialized institutions, which will be replaced with a system of alternative facilities.

79. To improve the accessibility, availability and quality of services, the Act provides for the establishment of a National Mental Health Care Oversight Commission, whose main duties are to monitor, either ex officio or in response to complaints from individuals, the living conditions of persons who are hospitalized for mental health reasons or living in public or private residential facilities, including persons subjected to judicial proceedings, and, in coordination with the National Human Rights Institution and Ombudsman's Office, to disseminate in the community, as widely as possible, information on the regulations applicable to mental health care and on national and international mechanisms for the protection of human rights.

Medical-Occupational and Psychosocial Rehabilitation Centre, formerly the Dr. Bernardo Etchepare and Dr. Santin Carlos Rossi psychiatric clinics

80. The current administrators of the Medical-Occupational and Psychosocial Rehabilitation Centre have set as their primary aim the definitive replacement of the institutional model with a service delivery framework emphasizing individuals' human rights and capacity for recovery. In this connection, the various services are being reorganized in accordance with a model of care, recovery, rehabilitation and wellness that reflects a strategy of interpersonal engagement aimed at preserving individuals' competencies and fostering the development of new strategies for improving psychosocial functioning and community, family and social reintegration.

81. The main actions taken to improve living conditions in the psychiatric clinics are:

- Demolition of pavilions 24, 29 and 30 of the former Bernardo Etchepare sector, which did not have the necessary physical conditions for inpatient care;
- Refurbishment and completion of the new containment pavilion;
- Better lighting, cleaning, repairs and oversight and a protocol for consistent control of the dog population;
- Restructuring of the Infirmary Department, in which qualified nurses are always on duty;
- Restructuring of the Departments of Psychiatry, Medicine, Rehabilitation and Nutrition.

82. In addition, the administrators are working to create departments of nutrition and rehabilitation and a care unit for high-dependency users (by adapting remodelled pavilions 8 and 11), while continuing to work with families and institutions interested in supporting the process of conversion to a Medical-Occupational and Psychosocial Rehabilitation Centre.

83. Lastly, it should be noted that, as of 2015, the discharge programme was serving 139 patients living outside the facilities, with in-person follow-up by discharge teams at caregivers' homes. In addition, day-care centres for community-based rehabilitation continue to operate.

Right to education (arts. 13 and 14)

25. **Please provide information on the specific steps that have been taken to increase secondary school enrolment and lower the secondary school dropout rate, particularly in rural areas and among children of African descent, children with disabilities and children from low-income households. Please also report on the measures taken to improve the quality of education, in particular in terms of further developing training for teachers and improving their working conditions.**

84. Among the scholarship and support systems in place for current students, and the other measures already taken to prevent children from dropping out of primary and secondary school, the establishment of the Educational Development Protection System in 2015 is especially worthy of note. This system encompasses all levels of secondary education and is intended to foster the implementation of procedures for protecting and supporting the educational development of every secondary-school-age person in order to enable all students to complete the mandatory cycles.

85. As part of this system, a protocol for the protection of educational development was designed and implemented for secondary-school students in 2016. The actions and stages set out in the protocol are directly linked to an information system containing data on the identity and educational progress of each student, as well as a set of early warnings linked to a series of indicators for the rapid detection of students at risk of dropping out. These early warnings trigger different types of actions for encouraging every student to stay in school and continue his or her studies in the formal education system.

86. Furthermore, the early enrolment process for students who have completed six years of primary education is aimed chiefly at minimizing the risk that children might not continue their studies beyond the intersessional period. This process ensures that every child or adolescent has been assigned to a school for the first year of secondary education even before he or she has completed primary education.

87. Students are pre-registered online using the Ceibal platform (used for follow-up in primary education), which also serves as a mechanism for surveying families' preferences with regard to the choice of a secondary school for their children. In November 2016, 98.3 per cent of all the students who were about to complete primary education were pre-registered.

88. In the area of teacher training, the objectives established by the Teacher Training Council for the period 2015-2020 include the transition to the University of Education (University Institute of Education), with a focus on university-level training of teachers in Uruguay.[27]

89. Through a university-based approach, efforts will be made to:

(1) Advance further in the implementation of a teacher training system. This means developing a systemic vision of training, involving a comprehensive, coherent and consistent approach to the various stages of the process, underpinned by a single set of principles;

(2) Continue the process of institution-building, with the aim of creating an open and flexible institution that is strongly linked to knowledge creation, enhanced by research at all levels and responsive to the cultural, social and technological changes of the early twenty-first century;

(3) Lay the academic and institutional foundations for university-level education, building on the work done in the previous period. In this regard, it will be necessary to conduct a study of the current departmentalized academic structure, with a view to developing a coordination hub for research, extension and teaching, covering broader fields of knowledge that include areas conducive to cross-disciplinary work;

(4) Redefine the role of teachers and departmental coordinators to include the promotion of teaching, research and extension;

(5) Restructure the hierarchy of teaching positions as a series of academic steps that are adjusted on the basis of comprehensive assessments, including self-assessment and assessments by students, peers and senior teaching staff (departmental coordinators, school principals);

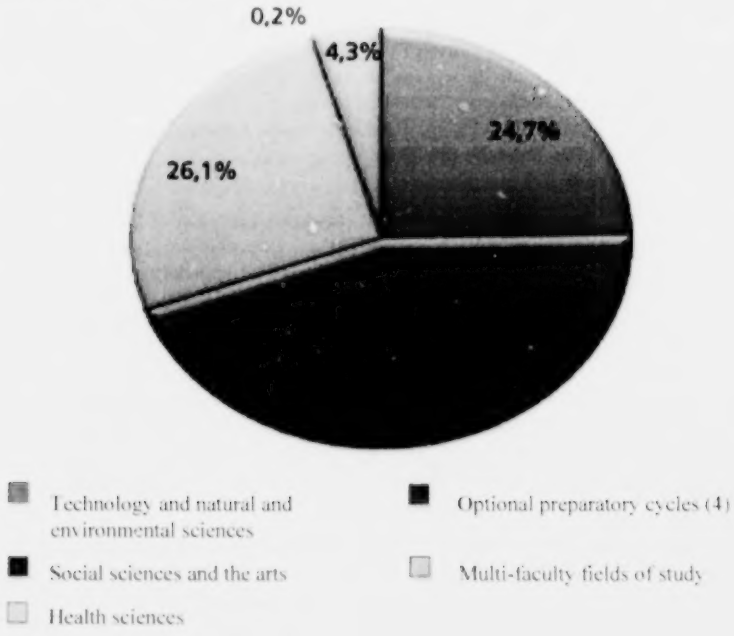
(6) Develop special statutory rules for the Teacher Training Council that are separate from those governing other councils, so as to facilitate the implementation of the objectives outlined above.

26. Please indicate what percentage of students pursue higher education and what measures have been taken to ensure that higher education is accessible and affordable, especially for students from disadvantaged and marginalized families, including persons of African descent and persons with disabilities.

90. According to the results of the university census conducted in 2012, the undergraduate student population is 85,905, representing 109,563 registrations by faculty or school and 130,941 registrations by field of study. This means that for every student at the University of the Republic, there are approximately 1.5 registrations by field of study.

[27] http://www.cfe.edu.uy/images/stories/pdfs/documentos_aprobados_cfe/documento_orientacione_objetivos.pdf

Figure 10
Percentage of students, by area[23]



91. One extremely important consideration is the location of the campuses where these students are pursuing their studies. The results of the 2012 web census show that, of the 85,905 students enrolled at the University of the Republic, 93.9 per cent are studying at campuses in Montevideo, 5.2 per cent at campuses elsewhere in the country and 1.0 per cent at campuses both in Montevideo and elsewhere.

92. In terms of registrations by field of study (130,941), the total number of registrations for students at campuses outside Montevideo is 6,734, which represents 5.1 per cent of total University registrations.

93. In 2015, the University took in 15,373 first-year students, of whom 11,750 (76.4 per cent) had graduated from upper secondary school the previous year.

94. State higher education is provided free of charge, pursuant to the General Education Act (No. 18437). Nonetheless, Uruguay has a Solidarity Fund established with the primary goal of giving more young people access to tertiary education through a professionally managed scholarship system supported by contributions from graduates of the University of the Republic and of the tertiary level of the Technical and Vocational Education Council. These scholarships are available to Uruguayan students at the University of the Republic, the University of Technology and the tertiary level of the Technical and Vocational Education Council who are from households that do not have enough resources to support them financially while they are pursuing their studies.

95. The Department of Social Programmes and Projects of the University of the Republic is tasked with the promotion of activities aimed at improving the quality of life of University staff and students for the purpose of ensuring access and equity for all, thereby helping to democratize education.

96. In pursuit of its overall objectives, it implements outreach and inclusion strategies for the whole University population, including programmes in the areas of scholarships (for

[23] *Source*: 2012 web census, University of the Republic.

food and transport, among other things), housing, rent guarantees, decentralization and gender.

97. In addition, with respect to the rights of persons with disabilities, there is funding to provide deaf students with sign-language interpreters and to provide assistance for transporting students with motor difficulties to classes and examinations throughout the year. Also in this context, full support has been provided to students who have suffered serious accidents or required treatment for chronic illnesses. Approval is granted for most requests relating to medical or health problems, in particular special medical tests and the purchase of hearing aids and/or prostheses.

98. With regard to persons of African descent, article 6 of Act No. 19122 provides that the national and departmental systems for awarding and allocating academic scholarships and other forms of support, even those financed through international cooperation, must include quotas for persons of African descent in the award and allocation processes. At least 30 per cent of the funding available through the Carlos Quijano Scholarship (article 32 of Act No. 18046 of 24 October 2006) will be allocated to persons of African descent.

27. **Please provide information about the specific steps that have been taken to protect the country's cultural diversity, to foster an awareness of the cultural heritage of indigenous peoples and Afrodescendent communities, and to create favourable conditions for them to preserve, develop, express and disseminate their identity, history, language, traditions and customs.**

99. The centres run by the Ministry of Education and Culture conduct activities aimed at protecting cultural diversity and spreading awareness of local identities. Nationwide, the following activities were carried out in 2016, with the participation of a total of over 425,000 people.

Table 13

Talks	245
Courses and workshops	1 061
Performing arts presentations	422
Musical performances	373
Audiovisual presentations	301
Recreational activities	314
Exhibitions and fairs	136

100. The commitment undertaken by Uruguay with its ratification, in 2007, of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions is reflected in specific measures and spheres of action.

101. Culture Factories programme: Established in 2007, this programme is intended to strengthen the country's human and productive capital through the creation of training opportunities geared to the development of cultural enterprises. This programme has used culture as a vehicle for nurturing folk knowledge, supporting disadvantaged groups and strengthening productive enterprises. The individuals working in the 29 factories established during the reporting period include persons of African descent, members of the LGBT population, residents of rural communities, persons with disabilities and persons deprived of liberty.

102. Cultural Industries programme: Under this programme, centres with recording and audiovisual equipment are made available to low-income individuals, especially adolescents and young people, to channel their creative potential towards new technologies related to communication and culture. There are currently 18 centres throughout the country, including centres in Montevideo neighbourhoods, towns in the country's interior, correctional facilities and a psychiatric hospital.

103. Urban programme: This programme is for people living on the street. It is based squarely on the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the

equality and dignity of all cultures and equitable access to the various forms of cultural expression.

28. Please indicate what steps have been taken by the State party to ensure affordable access to the Internet for disadvantaged and marginalized persons and groups, including those in rural areas.

104. As of August 2016, 75 per cent of the country's households had a broadband Internet connection. As of that same month, 97 per cent of the households in Montevideo and an average of 90 per cent of those in the capitals of the other 18 departments in Uruguay had 4G LTE coverage.

105. As the Committee is aware, since 2007 Uruguay has been implementing the Basic Computer Educational Connectivity for Online Learning (CEIBAL) Plan, an initiative that provides universal access to personal computers (laptops) in all public primary and secondary schools, with free Internet access throughout the education system, including in rural areas. Since 2015, the programme has been supplemented by the Ibirapitá Plan, which promotes the digital inclusion of older persons of limited means by providing them with free tablets with a specially designed, intuitive, user-friendly interface. Training workshops and support services are offered under the Plan to ensure a successful user experience.